

Gator Tales



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A newsletter for the citizens of the PRVWSD community

The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District

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Independence Day BLAST!

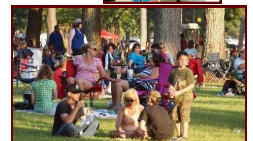
An estimated 20,000 people enjoyed events surrounding the 2nd annual Independence Day Celebration at The Rez, sponsored by the Barnett Reservoir Foundation and the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District.

Events at Lakeshore and Old Trace parks included music, headlined by Greenwood native and country music recording artist Steve Azar and local favorite The Chill, military displays, Waterfest, children events and a Classic Car Cruise-in. On-the-water events included the lighted boat parade and the Jackson Yacht Club's Blessing of the Fleet, capped off by a fireworks show shot from the reservoir's new barge system.

Lighted boat parade winners as selected by judges:

Over 30 feet — 1st place, Boat No. 6, captain Jody Carson at the helm; 2nd place, Boat No. 13, captain Lee Clark.

Under 30 feet — 1st place, Boat No. 10, captain Hayden Richardson; 2nd place, Boat No. 16, captain Wade Robinson.



Steve Azar



News Around the REZ

SCHEDULED EVENTS

7/27/13	Disc Golf Tournament	Pel.Shore
8/10/13	Tri 4 Life Triathlon	Fannin
8/24/13	CARA Animal Shelter Fund Raising Event	Pel.Shore
8/25/13	Pinelake Annual Baptism	Lakeshore
8/27/13	MS College Student Greeting	Old Trace
9/2/13	Jackson Cyclists Bike Ride	Old Trace
9/8/13	9-11 Memorial Run	Lakeshore
9/14/13	Gator Bait Kayak Race	Pel.Shore
9/14/13	Bike Out Hunger Bike Race	Old Trace
9/29/13	Morrison Heights Picnic & Baptism	Old Trace

REGULATION CHANGES

Parking restrictions in subdivisions and clarifying signage rules are two of the changes in the 2013 regulation package adopted by the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District.

Reservoir general manager John Sigman said the new parking rules will limit parking of automobiles on the street and prohibit parking cars and recreational vehicles in the front yards of houses.

The regulation changes can be found online at www.TheRez.MS Comments are welcomed.

OVERLAY MEETING AUG. 13

A meeting to discuss the Reservoir Community District will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 13 at the Northwest Rankin Middle School cafeteria. The overlay plan is scheduled to be implemented on Oct. 1. Elected officials from Rankin County and officials from the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District have been invited to participate in the discussion. The public is invited.

USER FEES CONSIDERED

Pearl River Valley Water Supply District officials are currently considering instituting user fees for lake users, hunters and campers to help fund improvements and maintenance of its recreational programs.

“For so long, the leaseholders of the reservoir have shouldered the entire financial burden of maintaining our facilities,” said board chairman Jack Winstead. “Frankly, we have simply reached the point where we have to find new sources of revenue. A user fee program is one of those sources.”

Several years ago, a boating user fee program was instituted, only to be withdrawn when legislation was passed that would have eliminated the PRVWSD budget had it not been repealed.

“That language had remained in the budget bill each year since, until 2013,” reservoir general manager John Sigman said. “It was deleted by the same legislator who added it.”

Only the basics of the user fee program have been discussed, and no dollar amounts have been set. One proposal would allow each leaseholder one free lake user permit per household, as long as the boat title was held by the leaseholder.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Fannin Landing

Work on the two new two-lane boat ramps at Fannin Landing has been completed, and the three old single-lane ramps have been demolished. The new ramps were open in time for July 4.

The new ramps include floating courtesy piers, one of which is suitable for physically challenged boaters, a riprap breaker wall that shields the launch from rough water and a larger and redesigned parking lot. Funding was provided through the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

One remaining piece to the facility is still in the bidding process, a new comfort station and pavilion to be built on the south side of the parking area near the new ramps.

FLOOD INSURANCE: If you have received a flood certification letter from your insurance or mortgage company and you would like to discuss the certification, please contact PRVWSD staff at 601-856-6574.



Revised Hunting Regulations Adopted

Emphasizing safety and buffering intrusion on developed areas, the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District Board of Directors has adopted updated hunting regulations on Barnett Reservoir property.

“We felt it was time to bring our regulations up to date, and working closely with wildlife officials who do this routinely, our staff came up with what we think are regulations that will promote hunting without encroaching on our leaseholders and other user groups,” said

John Sigman, general manager of The Rez. “This updating was long overdue. Our regulations were outdated in many respects and confusing.”

Hunting has always been legal on many unoccupied areas of the reservoir, like thousands of prime habitat along the upper river area and along the Rankin County side of the main lake. In recent years other areas have been opened up to restricted hunting, like archery only for deer.

“Safety was our No. 1 consideration, and you will see that in the regulations,” Sigman said. “We still will not allow hunting with any centerfire rifles or pistols for any game, but we have made changes that will help hunters. In some areas, we will allow shotguns with slugs, but not buckshot. We have added larger shot sizes for non-toxic shells used in waterfowl hunting.

“We did vary from state regulations involving primitive weapons for deer hunters. We will require that hunters use true muzzle-loading rifles, stuffing the bullet down the barrel.”

The new regulations clarify in simple terms what hunting is allowed where, and addresses ATV usage and restrictions as well as mandatory use of a fall-restraint system for anyone using a tree stand.

The proposal also gives the Board authority to create special permit-only archery hunting in areas never before included in the regulations. One of those areas would be about 400 acres of prime deer habitat below the dam, although it is unlikely a program would be in place for this fall season.

The proposed regulations, which are in the comment phase of the regulatory process, will be finalized in time for the 2013-14 hunting season.

“What we want now is for everyone to have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the proposed regulations,” Sigman said. “You can find the proposed regulations and the maps online at our website, www.therez.ms. Look them over and tell us what you think.”

Alligator Hunting: Beating the Odds

The competition was heavy for the 70 alligator hunting permits available on Barnett Reservoir, with 4,585 applicants entering the draw. That means applicants had a .015 percent chance of success.

The 10-day season will be held Aug. 30-Sept. 9, and be limited to the upper river area to lowhead dam and that part of the main lake above a line from Fannin Landing to channel marker “A” of the main boat channel to the Natchez Trace Overlook. No hunting will be allowed in Pelahatchie Bay or in any areas north or west of the Natchez Trace.

For the first time ever, alligator hunting will be allowed on the Pearl River below the dam and above the lowhead dam. Both are parts of the newly created Northeast Zone, for which 150 permits were available and includes all areas of the state north of I-20 and east of I-55.

Permits for the Barnett Reservoir area will not be legal in those areas, nor will Northeast Zone permits be legal for the open areas between the dam and lowhead dam.





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Show your support for The REZ by being one of the first 300 to register. You can pre-order your tag for only \$31. Of that fee, \$24 will go directly to The REZ for improvement projects at the reservoir. We must pre-sell 300 tags before the tax commission will begin production. Contact Cindy Ford at CFord@TheRez.MS or visit our web site for more information: www.TheRez.MS

DREDGING PROGRAM DELAYED

Due to high costs related to long-range transportation of spoilage, the extensive dredging program targeting boat channels in reservoir subdivisions has been delayed. Reservoir general manager John Sigman said that bids submitted through two rounds of bidding had to be rejected.

“None were within the price range established within our budget,” Sigman said. “The major issue is the distance needed to pump the spoilage to satisfy leaseholders who basically told us at a public meeting they didn’t want spoil placed ‘in their backyards’ or on existing spoil islands.

“That means we have to find alternative areas that are both acceptable to leaseholders and closer to the priority dredge sites in Bay Park and Forest Point scheduled to be in the first phase of the project.”

Sigman said many sites are being considered. One possible spoil site would be the east side of Pelahatchie Shore Park, which would eventually add several acres to the park. Future plans for development include building a sandy swimming beach, similar to the one at Lakeshore Park that has become very popular. If approved, the spoil would be moved to the shoreline during the fall when park usage is down and would be finished by the spring.

Ideas? Comments? If you have 'em, we'll take 'em. Comments@TheRez.ms